

2ND EDITION Newsletter
**HIGHWAY 401
EXPANSION PROJECT**
June 2022

PROGRESS ON THE PROJECT!

Over the last three years, despite challenges faced throughout the pandemic, great strides have been made in the advancement of Highway 401, Mississauga to Milton. The 18-kilometre stretch of roadway has been vastly transformed from what once was a six-lane highway, to now, a 10-12 lane expanded route.

As part of a robust seeding and re-planting scheme designed by environmental experts on the project, thousands of new shrubs and native trees have revitalized the vegetation along the highway – mitigating impacts on the local ecosystem, protecting existing species, and welcoming new birds and wildlife to the area.

In an effort to minimize waste and promote sustainable infrastructure, materials including asphalt and concrete from the original lanes and barrier walls are being recycled and reused for the base of the new lanes.

Three bridges that were magnificently demolished with little disruption to the travelling public have been expertly reconstructed and reopened to motorists, with recreational lanes added for pedestrian and cyclist use.

The rehabilitation, restoration and installation of vital infrastructure under the highway lanes, including culverts and sewer systems, as well as the CN and CP Rail underpasses are well underway or completed.

Realignment of five interchanges were a main focus in 2021. These changes reconfigured all access points and off-ramps to Highway 401. In August, the newly built lanes at Regional Road 25 to Trafalgar Road opened to motorists. Additionally, the Eastbound and Westbound ramps of Highway 407ETR transitioned traffic to the new lanes shortly after. In December, the remaining stretch of the new lanes opened from Trafalgar Road to the east limits at the Credit River.

As construction continues, the dedicated crew is working diligently to open all five and six-lane sections of the highway. All motorists are urged to be aware of their route and surroundings and always drive with caution and according to road conditions.

QUICK FACTS

650,000 of
3,388,800 
METRIC TONNES OF
GRANULAR RECYCLED
AND REPURPOSED
+ 750,000 METRIC
TONNES OF ASPHALT

3,250 
METRIC TONNES OF REBAR

67,564 CUBIC
METRES OF
CONCRETE 

3 LANES OF TRAFFIC
MAINTAINED IN EACH
DIRECTION AT
PEAK TIMES 

9 WILDLIFE JUMPOUTS
and **3** WILDLIFE
CROSSINGS 

**CHECK OUT OUR
PHOTO GALLERY TO SEE
THE TRANSFORMATION!** 

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Trees, shrubs, grassland areas and pre-existing concrete structures such as bridges and culverts provide habitat for many wildlife species in and around the Highway 401 corridor. As part of the Highway 401 Expansion Project some of this habitat was removed and access was restricted as areas were being worked on. WCC has been responsible for restoring wildlife habitat, and in some cases, enhancing the environment to a superior, more favourable habitat for wildlife species.



12,890 TREES AND SHRUBS PLANTED TO DATE FROM THE CREDIT RIVER to REGIONAL ROAD 25

HORNBY CREEK

Hornby Creek, which is on the north side of Highway 401 east of Sixth Line, was dominated by Common Buckthorn, which is a non-native invasive tree species. This tree species is not typically preferred by birds for nesting. WCC commenced the removal of the Common Buckthorn in the early summer of 2020, when the realignment of Hornby Creek was undertaken. More desirable trees and shrubs for nesting birds, such as Trembling Aspen and Large-tooth Aspen, were planted. Since Common Buckthorn has been removed from this area, birds such as American Goldfinch and Northern Cardinal have been observed nesting in the newly planted trees, suggesting that the area has become more attractive for birds to nest in.



MITIGATION LANDS

The Mitigation Lands, located on the southeast side of Trafalgar Road and Highway 401, are used for the sole purpose of compensation plantings. WCC planted a variety of trees and shrubs within this area and have noted a high amount of wildlife activity in the area since planting took place. Animal tracks belonging to a diverse group of mammals, including raccoons, opossums, skunks, red fox, coyotes, and white-tailed deer have been found in the Mitigation Lands. Eastern White Cedar, which provides over-wintering habitat, and fruit bearing Black Cherry are suspected to be attracting the wildlife to the area.

REPLENISHING

To date a total of 12,890 trees and shrubs have been planted within the corridor. There is also a detailed seeding plan with specific seed types, which correlate with their proximity to watercourses, the highway, interchanges and restoration areas. The Highway 401 Expansion project also includes barn swallow kiosks for barn swallows to nest in, bat houses throughout the corridor, fencing to keep wildlife off the highway, wildlife crossings under the highway at watercourses and wildlife escape ramps to ensure a safe route for species exiting the highway.



WILDLIFE CROSSINGS

Six wildlife escape ramps and one wildlife crossing have been installed to date at locations within the corridor that were identified to have a large amount of wildlife activity. These escape ramps and the wildlife crossing serve as opportunities for wildlife to safely move between habitats in and around the Highway 401 corridor, while keeping them off the highway and reducing the risk of collision for motorists.

BIGGER AND BETTER BRIDGES

Trafalgar Road Bridge

After a three-week closure of the northeast ramp to Trafalgar Road and an aggressive construction schedule, the newly built Trafalgar Road Bridge opened to motorists in the summer of 2021. The new bridge tied into the newly constructed lanes of Highway 401. Shortly after, demolition of the third and final (original) bridge occurred and crews impressively removed any evidence of the structure original bridge within a seven-hour span.



Sixth Line

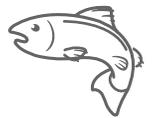
Nearly a year after the tear down and closure of Sixth Line Bridge, two way traffic was restored to the newly built bridge in September of 2021. Sixth Line Bridge now has expansive lanes and wider shoulders to accommodate cyclists, and higher railings for the protection of cyclists. This new infrastructure provides safer and better traffic flow.



SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRIDGE EMBOSSEMENTS

Three of the bridge underpasses feature embossments on the wingwalls. The designs were selected in consideration of the environmental and historical significance of the area.

Creditview Road Bridge: Salmon, to represent the salmon found in the Credit River.



Trafalgar Road Bridge: Wheat, in recognition of the historical farming operations in the area.

Sixth Line Bridge: Monarch Butterfly, to represent the Monarch habitat found throughout the corridor.



Creditview Road Bridge

Originally built in 1958, Creditview Road Bridge was narrow with only two lanes and did not accommodate pedestrian traffic. Its vertical clearance was also inadequate for today's large and tall transport trucks. Crews are hard at work preparing for Stage two, where traffic lanes will expand from two to four. A multi-use path for walking, running or cycling will be open to pedestrians this summer. This new infrastructure provides safer and better traffic flow with protection for recreational users.

